GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:3791
ANSWERED ON:13.12.2002
NEGOTIATION TO PROTECT INDIAN AGRICULTURE IN WTO
N.N. KRISHNADAS

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the strategy being prepared for the negotiation to protect our agricultural sector in the coming Ministerial level conference of WTO to be held in Cancun in Mexico;

(b) whether there is any move to convene the meeting of the State Agriculture Ministers of the country to sort out the general issues for WTO meeting; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY)

(a) to (c): The Fifth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization (WTO), scheduled to be held in Cancun, Mexico, on 10-14 September 2003 will take stock of progress in negotiations, provide any necessary political guidance, and take decisions as necessary.

India`s position and approach in the on-going negotiations in agriculture under the WTO`s Agreement on Agriculture is based on wide-ranging consultations held by the Government from time to time with the Governments of States and Union Territories including State Agriculture Ministers, representatives of political parties, farmers` associations, eminent agro-economists and research institutions. In these consultations, there is a general convergence of the views of various stake-holders in agriculture on the need to safeguard the interests of our agricultural production and farmers during the negotiations by, inter alia, providing appropriate levels of tariff protection on imports and taking into account the food security and livelihood concerns of developing countries like India, and through increased market access for agricultural products of export interests to us. India has been building coalitions with other WTO Members holding similar interests and concerns. The negotiations are scheduled to be concluded by 1 January 2005.